3 Trade in America 18.

SEASONABLE ADVICE,

TO

The MEMBERS of the British Parliament,

CONCERNING

Conciliatory MEASURES with AMERICA;

AND AN

ACT of PERPETUAL INSOLVENCY,

FOR

RELIEF of DEBTORS:

WITH

SOME STRICTURES

ON THE

RECIPROCAL DUTIES

OF

SOVEREIGNS, and SENATORS.

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M,DCC,LXXV.

G.R.
III.

TO HIS GRACE THE

DUKE OF GRAFTON.

MY LORD,

THOUGH these pages, ſollicit the eye, and the heart, of every Senator, they are, in a particular manner, devoted to the conſideration of your Grace; and for theſe very rational reaſons: Firſt, Becauſe you are an illuſtrious figure, in the Britiſh Parliament. Secondly, Becauſe, being ſuch, you muſt naturally poſſeſs that dignity, political pathos, and ſenatorial influence, ſo eſſential to the promotion of the important ſubjects, I have treated; and laſtly, Becauſe at the opening the ſeſſion of the preſent year, your public conduct, appeared to be the effort, of a conſcience reſolved. A conſcientious man, muſt at leaſt be a man who feels right; and it will be

ſeen

ſeen that, in theſe ſheets, I have made appeal rather to the Sympathy of Parliament, than (by dragging its Members along the beaten roads of debate) done nothing better at laſt, but perſuaded them to tread again, the tedious political track, which hath been already but too much trodden.

Bigot to no party, I have taken only, the ſide of Humanity,——*a ſide, my Lord, the nobleſt that can in this world be eſpouſed by the Sovereign, the Senate, or the ſoul. Neither eloquence, nor oratory, nor wit, nor wiſdom, can ſo well employ their powers, as in its ſervice. It is, in real truth, the* ONLY *buſineſs, for which we were created; and it ſhould be equally the contemplation of the Philoſopher, the ſong of the Poet, and the ſtudy of the Stateſman.——"All hearts can reach it, and all heads conceive." In a word, every ſenſation belonging to our nature, might point out to us, the duty of building our ſyſtem, on the baſis of humanity. Where the foundation is ſolid, the edifice ſhall be co-eval with the moſt durable things. The love of man, to man,——the tender and reſiſtleſs in-*

ſpiration

ſpiration——nay, the very ſelf-love——the ſocial *ſelf-love, which perſuades us to communicate joy to* more *than ſelf.—Ah, my Lord, what a paſſion! It is principle—it is patriotiſm—it has in it, the reliſh of ſalvation—May its enthuſiaſm touch the tenderneſs of every Engliſh boſom: may the throb of every Britain confeſs it: may it ever attend your Grace, your brother Senators, and bleſs your country.*

I am,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt obedient humble ſervant,

The Author of the Pamphlet.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT was at firſt intended, by the Author of the following Addreſs, to have ſent it abroad while the Parliament was ſitting; but, on maturer reflection, it was judged better to delay the publication, 'till a period of coolneſs, and leiſure, when, the Receſs, may give the Members a fitter opportunity to conſider its arguments. With this view, it has been poſtponed; and with this view, it now makes its appearance.

SEASONABLE ADVICE, &c.

THE hour is come, Gentlemen, when concerns of the laſt importance to ſtates, ſocieties, and nations, are to engage your attention. The auguſt Parliament of Britain has been now ſome weeks aſſembled. You are aware that it was convened, at a criſis of infinite awe, conſequence, and alarm. The annals of tradition, and hiſtory, would in vain be ſearched for a parallel to the times immediately before us: Every moment is pregnant with ſomething peculiar, either at home, or abroad, for the contemplation, of the Counſellors of the Realm; and therefore, it has been happy, eminently happy for you, that the receſs from buſineſs, ſince the laſt ſeſſion, has given you full leiſure for the moſt reiterated deliberation.

Indeed, ſuch intervals, are not without very conſiderable advantages; they are to the Senator, the golden hours of opportunity: The ſacred retreats of the ſummer, are in an eſpecial manner to be venerated by men, who are to carry with them into the ſhades, thoſe deſigns, on whoſe ultimate event, ſo much depends—Deſigns, the reflection of which, ſhall give a colour to our national character; and either cover a whole empire, with the bluſhes of ſhame, or adorn it, with the laurels of glory.

You were ſeverally diſmiſſed to your ſeats by the ſovereign of theſe dominions, for the moſt weighty purpoſes. The bond of brotherhood, which was broken between related countries, was to be repaired: The wounds of the weſtern world were to be healed, the blood of the child, was to be ſtopped, by the hand of the parent. Syſtems of future ſecurity, were to be projected: Plans for the good order of the community, were to be conſidered: In ſhort—you were to ſupply yourſelves with a fund of patriot ſagacity, for the uſe of the enſuing year.

Upon

Upon a ceſſation, ſo ſeaſonable then; I congratulate you, Gentlemen; and, I doubt not, you have improved it to the nobleſt advantages. I am alſo willing to believe, that none of you have yielded, to the ſoftening relaxations of peace, nor to the unſenatorial idleneſſes, of a voluptuous vacuity. The times can allow no Senator to trifle; and amuſement, at beſt but an inoffenſive folly, is, at ſuch a period, downright diſloyalty. When the buſineſs of the winter is ſuſpended, and the parliamentary doors are cloſed npon us:--When eloquence hath made a pauſe, and the voice of debate is ſtill, it is then the duty of every repreſentative, of every county, to take with him into the receſſes of his villa, every patriotic impulſe--every impulſe, that may convert the country cloſet, into a cabinet of contemplation. The head, which has been diſtracted by public debate, has opportunity to compoſe and ſettle in the private ſcene; and thoſe, who have been long involved amid the perplexing din of diſputation, may there, coolly re-conſider what was at firſt agitated with too much ardour: They

may, as it were, digeſt and call into order the confuſion of the political Chaos,—they may correct incongruities, by more conſiſtent propoſals, or they may advance hints to perfection, which were before but in embrio.

Thus prepared then, Gentlemen, by ex-exerciſe, and by ſtudy, invigorated by the purity of vernal breezes, and aſſiſted by the ſedateneſs, of a ſalutary ſolitude, you return, (I truſt,) to our great mart of men, and public buſineſs; informed, inſtructed, and ſufficient: Every diſſipation is corrected—— every wildneſs is chaſtiſed.

Where is the Engliſhman who can refuſe to hail a return, ſo auſpicious! Our hearts are yours—we embrace you as Senators—we honour you as Stateſmen—we cheriſh you as Saviours. Some indeed there are among you, whom we view, as the ſublimer hopes, and deareſt denizons of our nation. The very Genius of our country is arouſed—— Britannia herſelf, our guardian and our goddeſs, ſurveys with a parent joy, and beati-

tude

tude the great pillars of the parliament. Above patronage, or party, ſhe looks at all, who deſerve her attention, with the eye of a mother. She regards the glowing talents, and animated powers of the young, and the weighty ſenſe of thoſe, whom time and experience have ripened, into ſagacity; ſhe is a foe to none, but to the foes of Great Britain; ſhe is a friend to all who eſtabliſh her prerogative, and confirm her charter.

In the firſt place then, would it not be a point that demands every nerve of ability, to examine, with diſcriminating accuracy, the preſent *real* poſture of affairs? View it but in the groſs——are you not ſtruck with an importance, in the great figures of the ſcene, which require to be ſupported, with labour and aſſiduity? The parts you have to act, cannot be ſuſtained, without the effort of a genius, adequate to the greateſt undertakings. How awful is the firſt glance! Does it not convince you, that the vigilant eye of the enemy, no leſs than the anxious one of the friend, is upon you? Every motion is the object of general ſpeculation: The

The Continent, the Colonies, and your native country; the powers of France and Spain, and England and America, wait impatiently for the wiſdom or the weakneſs of your final deciſions. Perhaps the whole cultivated world, is upon the watch. Britain, is a firſt figure, in our popular eſtimate of terreſtrial property. Her public meaſures cannot be indifferent to the moſt diſtant ſtates. Life, is a continual rotation of changes, and it is impoſſible to ſay, how far the remoteſt climates may be intereſted, in our abſurdity or ſucceſſes. At all events, however, our tumults extend as far, and infinitely farther, than we have right of territory: Every man, in every connected region, is either animated with hope, ſinking with deſpondence, or throbbing with apprehenſion.

Notwithſtanding all this,—undaunted by forms, unawed by fears, and at a period of ſuch unequalled delicacy, I ſtill claim the privilege of an Engliſh Citizen, to addreſs you. That a Citizen indeed may, through the medium of the preſs, convey his ſentiments

timents to men, in ſituations, to which a private Remonſtrance could ſcarce get acceſs, is amongſt the nobleſt liberties of the literature of this country. The ſentiments, indeed, that at this moment agitate my heart, and flow irreſiſtibly to my pen, (being intended for ſocial welfare) *demand* the reſpect of thoſe, for whoſe eye, and ſervice, they are particularly deſigned. I confeſs again, (in repetition,) that I take you, in the hour of hurry, and of perturbation. I the rather chooſe to ſpeak for that very reaſon: Believe me, Gentlemen, no *ordinary* cauſe ſhould draw me from the pleaſurable paths of poetical, or moral effort, into the perilous ways, of political inveſtigation. I have frequently found ſo much ſecurity at the foot of the hill—I have felt ſo ſincere a compoſure from the echo of traditionary buſtles, without taking part in them, that no common alarm, could ſeduce me abroad. —When the whirlwind is on the wing, who, but in the extremity, will go forth? "Peace is my dear delight;" and yet I have enough of patriotiſm in my temper, to put in ſome ſort, my own repoſe to the hazard, when

when, by ſuch *Romaniſm*—if you will forgive the word,—I have a fair chance to befriend my native country.——To you, Gentlemen, remember, we, of neceſſity entruſt our dignity, as men; our property, as citizens; and, even the holy depoſit of our freedom, as Britons.

" 'Tis a large truſt, and ſhould be managed nicely." You will therefore ſuffer an honeſt Addreſs,—I will venture to call it *honeſt*, becauſe, it ſhall be made with the firmneſs of an Engliſhman, the ardour of a fellow-ſubject, the zeal of a fellow-creature.

Amidſt the multiplicity of objects that attract the attentions of the ſenate and mankind, there are Two of particular ſuperiority, as taking the lead in importance. They are, in truth, ſufficient to the exertion of all your talents, however ſplendidly gathered to a point: you perceive that I mean,

Our perturbations in America, and
The ſtate of our Public Priſons.

The

The firſt article, indeed, warms me; I feel it in every vein of my heart; and yet I do not enter upon it without difficulty. It has been ſo much the burden of ballads, the iteration of news-papers, the catch of pamphlet, and paragraph, the miſerable topic of addreſſes, and the reverberated ball of general prattle and penmanſhip, that the miniſtry and the minority, the politician and the poet, the whig and the tory, are equally at a loſs for novelty of argument, and original property of expreſſion—Fainting under the fatigues of prolixity, *pro* and *con*, (tho' trained to the trade of diſpute) are arrived at their *ne plus ultra*. Nor do I ſeriouſly believe, the utmoſt pregnancy of the human mind, could ſuggeſt a virgin ſentiment upon the ſubject.

Peace then—peace, to all the volumes that have been written upon it. Be it mine to uſe the arts only of diſpaſſionate perſuaſion. Be it mine, upon principles of *true* patriotiſm, to huſh the hurricane into a calm, not by entering into the niceties of enquiry, as to the firſt raiſers of it, but by ſhewing the

policy, the piety, and the neceſſity of contributing on both ſides, to its tranquillity.

Firſt then, take a general view of the matter as it ſtands upon record: turn over the files of our public prints—have recourſe to the catalogues of authentic intelligence: catch the tidings which are conſtantly wafted acroſs the ſea—obſerve the tear that is ſtarting in the eye of the wife—read the news, by which the blooming widow, is levelled with the earth. In the face of every citizen, behold the marks of fear, or doubt, or deſpair; and ſee the truth of affairs on all ſides. The alarm to mere murder, indeed, is now ſo common, that, like a funeral conſtantly paſſing the eye, it has loſt its terror, and accuſtomed impreſſion, on the multitude. Many there are, who take up the printed tidings of the day, and *tired of blood*, avoid the paſſages which relate the maſſacre of our countrymen. But ſurely this negligence—this apathy to the deſolation of kingdoms, and fall of empires, can prevail only on the

thoughtleſs and unfeeling. The fop will have his hour at the mirrour; the drunkard will grow blind over the bottle, and the rake paſs his night at a brothel, though all the kingdoms of the earth were at ſtake: many, perhaps, like Nero, would gratify the whim of the moment, though univerſal nature were in flames. But ſhall any judgment be formed from the conduct of ſuch incorrigibles? Theſe, are the cyphers of community.—Theſe, whatever their elevation, their fortunes, their adornments—are thoſe uſeleſs members of a ſtate, which, like the redundant branches of the oak, are an injury to it, even in the moſt radical ſenſe of ſpeaking. They will dreſs and diſſipate, and titter, and talk nonſenſe, let public affairs limp on, ever ſo lamely.

Divines, you know, Gentlemen, tell us, (and indeed we know by experience) there are many men, ſo habitually, and practically infamous, that they can blaſpheme, in the diſſolving decays of a conſumption, and laugh, amidſt the burnings of a fever.

So you will bear witneſs, there are many in the body political, ſo totally deſtitute of the patriot principle, that ſuch trifling matters as the welfare of King, and proſperity of People, whether they ſink, or whether they ſwim, will they enjoy themſelves at all hazards. They have no idea of that principle which the liberal of all ages have ſo often felt, and which the wiſe, have made the ſubject of their moſt maſterly compoſitions. Society is abſorbed, in ſelf. Country is nothing; even the ſpot, on which they were nurſed, is no otherwiſe dear, than becauſe they are, perhaps, in poſſeſſion of the ſpot, and can call it their *own*. In a word, they are creatures without the warmeſt feelings of nature; without conſideration; without effort; without cultivation; and, for the moſt part,—without capacity.—But I ſhould aſk pardon for throwing away your time in ſo long a digreſſion, eſpecially as it is impoſſible there ſhould be any perſons, ſo inſignificant—and ſo diſloyal, in the reſpectable circle, I have now the honour to addreſs,

You,

You, Gentlemen, as the real lovers of your country, (in the profoundeſt contempt of ſuch examples) view the perpetuated traditions, of terrors, and of death, in a more ſerious light. I beſeech you to mix, for a moment, (tho' they ſhould indeed be never undivided) the feelings of men, with the maxims of conſiderate ſtateſmen—lay aſide, the frigid prudencies of intereſt, and yield, to the ſympathies of nature.——Thus inſtructed—thus ſoftened—tell me your ſenſations? Some of your honourable ſociety are, no doubt, united by the moſt forcible ties, to valuable perſons, this moment in America: ſome have, perhaps, Friends at this inſtant, in arms againſt each other: ſome may be even Fathers, to children in an office, which makes the line of duty, through the body of a brother. To quit this execrable, Poſt—(at the idea of which I feel the revoltings of nature) is reprobated as rebellion: even to talk on the ſanguinary ſubject, in the language of ſenſibility, is puniſhed as Treaſon.

God of Heaven! to what a dilemma are Engliſhmen reduced! Where is the boaſted intrepidity of our anceſtors! Where is the ſpirit that was ſaid to nurſe, and cheriſh, the flame of freedom!

Pauſe a moment, Gentlemen, to examine this diſgraceful reduction.——Hath it not been the endeavour to weaken the liberty of the preſs? Have we not been inſulted, with the terrors of attachment, and general warrant? Have we not been threatened with deſpotiſm, in every ſhape? Have not our converſations been caught and carried off by the felon ear of the informer? Are we not at this very moment beſet with ſpies, whoſe dark, and inſidious buſineſs it is, like the dirty drudges who ranſack invention and the world for paragraph, to take us *unawares*, to miſrepreſent us to our fellow citizens, and to the ſenate? Is it not recent and bleeding, in every memory, that a Gentleman of blameleſs manners, (the general tenour of whoſe integrity might have ſecured him from ſo inconſiſtent a ſuſpicion) has

has been called to the bar of juſtice for the moſt abſurd charges? Have we not—but wherefore ſhould I proceed in the long liſt of interrogatories! In the name of Heaven, Gentlemen, how is it that we ſupport ourſelves, in theſe exigencies? How is it, that we bear ſo many Æthiop ſoils upon the ermine of the Britiſh character? If theſe violations continue, *where*, or *when* are we ſafe? From impoſture in the habit, and form of a *Gentleman*, who ſhall guard us! The liſtner may ſeduce us into the perilous ſubject, even while we are in the flow of confidence, of friendſhip, and of the ſoul. In the joyous, and unſuſpecting hour of hilarity, while the heart confeſſes the luxury of Champaign, we may be attach'd as traitors, for the eſcape of an unguarded word. Hence, a general jealouſy, will prevail in ſociety. One man, will be afraid of another: the bleſſing of ſpeech will be inverted: we ſhall meet our neighbours with a fearful eye, as if we ſuſpected they had caught the plague, and intended to circulate it. Our moſt holy places will be no longer a ſanctuary. When the Spirit of informing

forming is abroad, we ſhould wrap around us, (ſince the ſhield of innocence is ſo penetrable) a mail of ten-fold circumſpection. The eye, the ear, and every ſympathizing ſenſe which the Almighty hath given us as the centinels of human ſecurity, will be in arms. We ſhall not forget our fears even on the day which, *but* for them, would be devoted to the Deity: at the very foot of the altar we ſhall tremble, leſt the Informer ſhould inſidiouſly lie in wait, and convert our prayers into ſentiments of diſloyalty.

Read but the law of the land, ye natives of the nation, and let legiſlation engrave it in characters of blood.

Strike off the head of an American, or loſe your own. In other words, kill your countrymen, ye Britons, or be killed yourſelves. Noble dictate! Glorious injunction! and worthy the ſable heart wherein it was engendered. In the gradation of ſlaughter, it is but a natural progreſſion to turn the purple tide through the ſtreets of this metropolis.

metropolis. When was there ever a limit fixed, either to political or moral licentiouſneſs; and who knows what may yet happen? Probably when we have in the way of loyalty exterminated from the face of the earth, all thoſe who are defending their rights in America——who knows, I ſay, Gentlemen, but by that time we may have acquired ſuch an appetite of blood, that the devaſtation may be directed through the bowels of Great Britain? The ſwords of the ſoldiery, yet reeking with provincial gore, may be pointed againſt the very perſons who made them; and the poor mechanic ſhall ſuffer, for tempering the blade: The citizens ſhall then battle it away, 'till two champions only, of either country remain, to decide this ridiculous, this impolitic, this unnatural conteſt.

The ſubject, however, is on all hands too ſolemn, to be the ſport of witticiſm, or imagination. There is ſo much of dreadful reality, that *his* heart muſt be inſenſible indeed to the wounds of his native country, and thoſe allied to it, (whatever be his

political tenents) who does not earneſtly wiſh, for a pacific period, to ſuch accumulated calamities. At preſent, we are, without all doubt, the ridicule and the pity of the ſurrounding world; compaſſionated by our own countrymen, derided by others: To ourſelves, a bluſhing diſgrace, and in the eye of our natural enemy, to the laſt degree deſpicable. Even the people of this metropolis are unſettled; one half of them ſeem ripe for a revolt, and the other, conceal but ill, the vaſtneſs of their diſcontent. Take notice, Gentlemen, that, when the ſpirit of *deliberate* inſurrection is once arouſed, the moſt vigilant efforts will with difficulty appeaſe it. Let it then, at all events, be your firſt ſtep, to reſcue from contempt the ſenatorial character, by ſtopping the ſtreams which are iſſuing from the wounds, of kindred boſoms. Even while I am truſting this pathetic ſentiment to your underſtandings, the Demon of battle is buſy, either in private or public deſtruction: Hoſtilities can never ceaſe 'till our forces are abſolutely withdrawn from their frontiers, and till peace is again proclaimed

claimed through the affrighted land; and, perhaps, ere the eye can rapidly paſs on to the next ſentence, ſome other friend,—in a particular manner dear to ſome of you,—may fall a ſacrifice to the ſword of a relation. In a word then, let ſome meaſure be contrived, that may bury hoſtilities in irreſiſtible embraces; let Britons agree with Britons, and mixing their friendly forces together, march only againſt the *abſolute* enemies of their country. Such is the advice, Gentlemen, of a man of feeling. I cannot ſpeak to the matter as a politician, nor do I wiſh to penetrate the thick veil of ſtate myſteries. I have given you merely the wiſhes of a man who rejoices in the welfare of men——of an individual, affectionately united to his ſpecies. By what *ways and means* this delightful repoſe is to be brought about; by what methods the nations which are now agitated by public tumult, may be ſoftened into public tranquility, muſt be left to thoſe to whom ſuch points are entruſted. Away then with all the ſubtleties of political caſuiſtry; away with the nice, affected ſeparations between

the Prince and his people; To ſeparate their intereſts muſt for ever be impoſſible, without ſeparating at the ſame time their felicity. The child may as well hope to ſtruggle through the feebleneſs of infancy, without the aid of the parent, as for the ſubject and ſovereign to ſucceed reciprocally, without reciprocal aſſiſtance. In this country, when a King is without the love of his people, or the people alienated from the King, deſtruction to both is the inevitable conſequence: It ever was, and ever ſhall be ſo, while there are any ſuch things as human diſtinctions, and human government. On the one ſide, reſpect for the royal character is gone; on the other, a conſtant endeavour to teaze, invade, or tyrannize: All is jealouſy; all is alienation.

It is not neceſſary a man ſhould be a patriot to know, that, while we are thus wading in the blood of one another; while we are thus violating every law of life, of nature, and of humanity, we are at once the foes of man and God. It follows, upon

upon theſe premiſes, that to continue the cauſe, (whatever it may be) is to aggravate the effect; and by a natural conſequence, thoſe who aſſiſt in procuring the remedy, deſerve to ſhare the honours which ariſe from having adminiſtered to the diſeaſe; a diſeaſe which is rapidly eating into the very core of the conſtitution; and to which, if no political cathartic is ſpeedily applied, will aſſuredly affect the inmoſt vitals of this unhappy country, whoſe fate it has, indeed, ever been to receive wounds, diſorders, and indignities, from the paracidcal hands of her own children. The power, which depoſited in my breaſt the principle of ſympathy, impels me to be thus earneſt with you. I wiſh, neither to reflect on majeſty or miniſters; the ſum of my advice then is, that neither party ſhould too obſtinately inſiſt on the parade of ceremonies; that *ſervility* ſhould not be exacted on the one hand, nor too unreſpectful, indecent a *liberty*, be taken on the other. The pride of precedence, and the farce of firſt advances, are not more abſurd in drawing rooms, than in the ſtate: when miſconception hath

drawn

drawn the ſword, let reaſon, religion, and the voice of that charmer, Perſuaſion, return it to the ſheath. Surely, Gentlemen, in making up great differences, we may fairly diſpenſe with little formalities; and indeed, in ſuch emergencies, it will be the nobleſt effort of true wiſdom to ſmooth the way to national harmony, by removing, with mutual readineſs, every obſtacle in the road, even though it ſhould be at the coſt of ſome little condeſcenſion from the higher powers. It is certainly indecent to make an Engliſh King, a Monarch of ſtraw; and it is improper to reduce the ſubject to the ſlave: we are in a political ocean betwixt a Scylla and a Charibdis. To avoid ſtriking upon either, let the one party, ſteer with a gentle, ſkilful hand, and the other, yield to their guidance, (if they are not evidently making for the rocks) under pretence of wafting them in ſecurity to the ſhore. To borrow one more figure, let the one embrace, as father, the other, unite as child. The very tears are ſweet that are ſhed as the tribute of reconciliation, and we may ſtill be a happy and bleſſed people.

To

To finiſh therefore this deſultory ſketch:

You ſee, Gentlemen, that the long liſt of reciprocal miſtakes are now laid again upon the table before you: every member has the hopes and fears of a whole country upon him; the character of a Britiſh conſtituent, ever reſpectable, now *riſes* in its conſequence. What a charge is yours, when the happineſs or infamy of ſuch an empire as this, is in your hands! How the bare idea, of your importance ſwells upon the imagination! How it fills the ſoul with an image of your dignity!—May the Genius of Mercy aſſiſt at your conſultations. May you, in every meaſure, conſider yourſelves as Patriots, and as Engliſhmen; and may the congregated effort of ſo wiſe, ſo diſtinguiſhed, and ſo auguſt a body, (the natives of a nation long renowned for the ſagacity of its ſenators) be, what is ſo pathetically wanted, the panacea of repoſe, and the ſolid ſoul-formed union of Kings, Lords, Commons, and the community, to whom they are, by blood, by birth,

and

and by nature, ſo nearly and dearly allied.

Preſuming then in the fondneſs of my heart, that America and Great Britain, the parent and the child, are (by your mediations) to enjoy the tendereſt tranquillity, I proceed to mention to you the *other* ſubject matter of this letter—the PRESENT SITUATION *of* PUBLIC PRISONS. When the diſturbances *without doors* are brought to a pleaſing concluſion, what can ſo properly claim your next attention, as calamities at home? When ſcenes of blood ſhall ſhock the eye of an Engliſhman no more, what can ſo naturally engage his efforts, as the liberty of the ſubject? Survey, Gentlemen, at the preſent moment, the ſtate of the various jails of this kingdom: behold the families which have languiſhed there, under all the preſſures of poverty, the contagions of diſtemper, and the tyranny of debt, for a length of time. Let your compaſſion enter with mine, into cells, where law, (ſuch is her

her ſagacity has made little diſtinction betwixt guilt and misfortune; where the felon is faſtened by his chains, and the debtor, is faſtened by his bolt. What feeling is excited, Gentlemen, on your being told that the glutted priſons of the nation, now contain many *thouſands* of men—of men, abandoned by friends, (the uſual conſequence of misfortune) aſſaulted by ſickneſs, ſeized by famine, and neuters in ſociety!

Let the creditor make *his* appeal—What ſays he more, than the old ſtory: that money is his due; goods have been delivered; taxes are heavy; he had a ſum to make up; his wife muſt be maintained; times are hard, and the creature, whoſe body he has purchaſed, muſt lie defenceleſs, in a place of confinement, which of all others is the deareſt, (a ſecond inſtance of legiſlative wiſdom) till the account is diſcharged. Such is the language, of little authority. Legiſlation has put power into his hand, and his heart, is paltry enough to enjoy it. But what, after all, is, for the moſt part, his

triumph? Why, truly this—He has the poor, wretched perſon, at his command. He can literally ſay to him, *Thus far, fellow, ſhalt thou go, and no farther. Your liberty is mine, and I will limit it to the verge of ſo many feet.* What a privilege to a Chriſtian! How ſoothing to his heart! What an honour to his character!—Would I then, (ſay the ſons of trade, ever ſticklers for their prerogative) ſap the *credit* of the nation, or have the debtor go totally uncontrouled? Neither—But I would have credit in a great many caſes *reſtrained*, becauſe that reſtriction, would infinitely decreaſe the *number of debtors*. I am aware, that in *ſome* points, credit is the very ſupport of commerce. In *others*, it is an encouragement to every ſubterfuge and fraud; every whim of abſurdity; and every caprice of foppery. We live, Gentlemen, you are aware, in the moſt credulous country upon earth: with all his boaſted ſolidity, ſelf-love, and intelligence, an Engliſh tradeſman is the eaſieſt fool of artifice, imaginable. Although every news-paper accommodates him with a caution; though every friend affords

affords him a hint; and every brother of the buſineſs, is a pathetic example, to point out his danger, he is ſtill the obſtinate dupe of appearance; and repoſes an unbounded confidence in the promiſes of every *ſhewy ſtranger*. It is the general rule to lodge all the blame upon the *debtor*: but this, is only becauſe his ſpirit is bent to the earth by *obligation*: and there is ſomething in the nature of dependence, that ties the tongue of *oratory* itſelf. Another great and good reaſon for this, is, becauſe in fact, the intriguing claſs of tradeſmen all hang together: and it is not undiverting, to obſerve the wonderful ſimilarity in their ſentiments, on the article of demand. In the liberal ſcience of dunning, and threatening, there is, indeed, as far as I have obſerved, little variation. They are all, or moſtly, in one prevailing key of complaint—very ſorry to put a man into jail, but very much reſolved to keep him there, as long as the laws permit. It is too true, that *they*, ſtand in the field of argument, upon the moſt advantageous ground: the priſoner is ſafe, and therefore the creditor tells the ſtory his own

way; conſequently, till the matter comes before a court of juſtice, and even *there*, circumſtances are not always enough *examined*, the poor jail-bird is the burden of mechanic reprobation, among all the connections of the creditor, who has very often the impudence to call a man the groſſeſt names, merely becauſe he has been reduced to little uncomfortable ſhifts, which, by the bye, it is not two to one, his own aſſiſting villainies, have not brought about. But this almoſt digreſſing; I beg permiſſion, Gentlemen, more nicely, to join the thread. A man, however, acquainted with life, and the manners of this country, knows very well, where the error ought to be, very frequently to be *divided*. Let us, in the firſt place, look cautiouſly into the tricks of thoſe tradeſmen, who are particularly concerned in the equipment of the human body; thoſe who fit one man, to figure before another, viz. taylors, mercers, mantua-makers, milliners, &c. &c: are there greater miſchiefs than ſome of theſe, in the whole community? Do they not furniſh ſharpers, rakes, minors, proſtitutes,

proſtitutes, &c. &c. &c. with the moſt coſtly goods of their ſhops, and wealth of their warehouſes? Do not hundreds of them, at leaſt, *know* the conduct, and characters, of theſe ſort of cuſtomers?—True, but they truſt, it ſeems, upon the *hope* of being paid, within ſuch a *term of years*, and, charging accordingly, can afford to lie ſo long out of their money.—Fie upon it—fie upon it! Alas! Gentlemen, are not the promiſes of many a noble family brought, by theſe means, to utter deſtruction?—commonly to a jail—not infrequently to the gallows, by fellows, who upon the chance of the cuſtomer's reaching one and twenty, or ſurviving the parent, abſolutely force finery into their hands, and compel them into credit. There is a period, in human life, at which external ſplendour is almoſt irreſiſtible.—Decoration, is the firſt point that ſeizes the ſtripling upon his firſt coming to the metropolis: His acquaintances ſoon introduce him to men who will humour his paſſion; in conſequence of this, he is dreſſed, in all the trim of taſte; and, as he

he is told, nay, as he ſees, it is not elegant to be ſeen twice together in the ſame ſuit, he orders all the luxurious *varieties* of the wardrobe; and, in this manner, while his induſtrious father is, perhaps, anxiouſly denying himſelf a coat, that he may not break in upon the reſerve, which he has made for his child, the child is privily in arrears with the taylor, to the amount of half his fortune.

The preſent age is, likewiſe, you know, Gentlemen, diſtinguiſhed by a ſociety of wretches, to the bane of our youth, and the diſgrace of our country, known by the ſpecious appellation of Brokers,—an aſſociation, by whoſe means, young gentlemen are enabled to exhauſt their eſtates, many years before they come into poſſeſſion. This anticipation of their inheritance,—this clandeſtine method of ſelling their birthrights, is now ſo faſhionable a matter, that the advertiſements which announce it to the public, bring a very conſiderable ſum into the Stamp Office. Perſons diſpoſed to ſell, may, we are told, always depend on diſ-

patch

patch and ſecrecy; ſo that a Divine may barter for his church preferment, an annuitant truck for his life, and a widow traffic for her jointure, without any body being the wiſer; that is, they may be all cozened, without any perſon's being made a party to laugh at them. This, I confeſs is ſome conſolation; for ridicule is ſuch an *addition* to ruin, as no dupe can bear. But it does not take from the ſcandal of the practice; for, beſides this way of effecting the deſtruction of young people, and of making the diſpoſal of every comfortable property *eaſy*, it tends immediately to all other miſchiefs. When the ſpendthrift has ſtripped himſelf to the laſt guinea, and in the courſe of a voluptuous profuſion, has acquired an habit of expence, what, Gentlemen, muſt be the conſequence? The deficiencies of the purſe, will often be ſupplied by the piſtol; and when that reſource fails, a man of ſpirit frequently finds a reſource from the horror of his reflections, by tying the halter round his own neck: At beſt—this brokerage buſineſs, produces much neceſſity, flings a young

young fellow upon expedients, and in the progreſs of ſhifts, induces him to borrow, and run into debt, wherever he is able. Hence ariſes alſo, yearly, a prodigious number of priſoners.—But what ſhall we ſay of the times before us, when we contemplate the known fact of *forcing* thoſe women, who have loſt their innocence, to loſe alſo their liberty? How many wretches are there in this town, who urge the unfortunate, to buy every ſhewy bauble, and glittering gewgaw, till, having her once within their power, her perſon, is at their command? and when her beauty is tarniſhed in their ſervice, or loſes its accuſtomed price, they can be at laſt gratified by throwing her into a priſon, and there ſuffer her to paſs the reſidue of a life, which anxiety and diſeaſe have rendered unſerviceable.

Theſe, and various other impoſitions, are, undoubtedly, the cauſes which make our priſons overflow; theſe are alſo ſo many reaſons in favour of an Act of Inſolvency, upon a more liberal and extend-

ed

ed principle than the laſt. The ſcheme of a *perpetual* act, ought indeed to be duly digeſted, before it is carried into a law; but when it can be proved, by incontrovertible evidence, that the community will be, upon the whole, benefited thereby, the hour of hefitation will be over; and that this proof is of eaſy attainment, I hope I have, in ſome meaſure, already made apparent. If a very great number of priſoners, are made ſuch, by artful peoples taking advantage of the ardour and diſſipation of youth, (which is certainly the caſe) it follows that, when credit is obtained with greater difficulty, there muſt be fewer debtors. If ſecurity was required *indiſpenſibly*, and the commodity, could not be had without it, people, who are now profuſe of their property, would cheriſh it, as the only means of convenience and accommodation. The Sheriffs officers, I apprehend, carry much oftner in their writs, the names of men of pleaſure, than men of buſineſs: and with reſpect to the latter, who, I believe, muſt both give and take credit; a perpetual act would alſo be

doing a juſtice to them: for, if in the courſe of trade, a perſon falls into decay, and is afterwards in a jail, can any thing be more prepoſterous than to add beggary to Bankruptcy, by obliging him to lie there in hopeleſs miſery, till the lingering mercy of ſome diſtant act ſhall releaſe him? Some objection, indeed, to a perpetual act, may ſeem to ariſe, from the encouragement it may be ſuppoſed to give riſe to the *unprincipled:* but let it be remembered, that bad men will ever take advantage of public benefits; and a knaviſh individual, who is reſolved, to trick the Community, will, with the ſame vigilance, do it as eaſily by ſtaying forty months, as forty days. It is not in human prudence, or policy, to guard againſt the manœuvres of a villain: Fertile of miſchief, he laughs at the impotence of legal inhibition; and, ſure at laſt of a refuge in his artifice, he defies, the grated window, the gloomy cell, and the elevated wall. But it muſt be owned, an act of perpetuated inſolvency, is of too much importance to the empire, to be decided upon, without reiterated conſiderations. And yet,

gentlemen,

gentlemen, a *more limited act* is, without all doubt, *immediately* neceſſary. It is neceſſary to the health, happineſs, and ſubſiſtence, of a very large body of the people. Were any of you to indulge the agonizing curioſity, of forgetting awhile the ſplendour of your own circumſtances, or rather to compare them with the circumſtances of thoſe who are now pining in priſons; were you to examine their ſituations minutely, and collect into one afflicting aggregate, the weight of miſery they ſuſtain—from children born in ſlavery, and mothers unable to accommodate them with the meaneſt conveniences of the nurſery—from the cruelty of creditors, abſolutely paying daily, a ſcanty pittance to confine the fathers—of acute neceſſities, which often relax the nobleſt vigour of the beſt principles, and of deſpair, which hurries the debtor to the bottle; were you to behold theſe evils, Gentlemen, you would behold alſo the powerful reaſons for a general releaſe. Being poſſeſſed, however, of the *fact*, it is yours to repreſent it, with the eloquence of ſenators, the pathos of

Chriſtians, and the ſenſibility of men, to your Sovereign—a Sovereign, whoſe acknowledged characteriſtic, is *clemency*. However deeply the royal ear may be intereſted, in the conciliations of jarring countries, his heart is ever open to the appeals of humanity. Paint to him, Gentlemen, then in lively colours, the preſent calamitous conditions of his *impriſoned ſubjects*—Deſcribe to him what they *ſuffer*—alarm his pity—awaken his humanity—ſoften him, and ſucceed.

To exert yourſelves upon ſuch occaſions, is certainly one great branch of your official duty. Indeed, the Sovereign, and his Senators, are drawn to each other by the cloſeſt cords of the political connection. It is the buſineſs of the Senator, to caſt the moſt acute and inveſtigating eye over his country; to poſſeſs himſelf fully of all her wants: to ſtudy her temper,—her genius, her conſtitution: to know what ſhe can naturally bear, and what, it would be madneſs to adminiſter. Having ſucceeded in his ſcrutiny, he ſhould repreſent her caſe

to his fellow Senators and Sovereign: and the reſult of their united conſultations ſhould be what, if the patriot principle were really alive in us, it *would* be—a happy, healthy, and wholeſome country. The intercourſe betwixt a Monarch and his Miniſters, gentlemen, ſhould be to the laſt degree intimate; he ſhould be conſidered only, as a friend, in a ſuperior ſtation: His pre-eminence ſhould have your reſpect, but his regalia, and the ordinary appendages annexed to his Crown, ſhould be the minuteſt objects, of that pre-eminence. His jewels may captivate the eye, unaccuſtomed to finery, and his robe may impreſs the multitude with the ideas of idolatry, but men to whom magnificence is familiar,—thoſe, to whom theſe ſentiments are addreſſed, are not taken by the tinſel, but know that a Monarch, is a man—Why ſhould they not then uſe him as ſuch? Why ſhould they refuſe him, the bleſſings of truth? His time of life, his looks, his talents, are all favourable, to the reception of ſincerity. He has a reliſh for all the kindneſs of ſocial, and domeſtic tenderneſs—

What

What a parent!—What a huſband!—What a maſter!—In every humane purpoſe, he is aſſiſted by all the delicate aſſiduity of female ſoftneſs. Is calamity to be removed? —the purſe of a Princeſs, is open—Is a nation in arms?—the tears of a Queen are ſacrificed to the tumult.—Thus enriched by Providence, from what poſſible ſource, gentlemen, ariſes the miſery ſtated in the *firſt* parts of this paper?—I am loſt in the labyrinth of conjecture!—what appeared clear before, is again opaque—the fountain head, ſeems inveloped in clouds and thick darkneſs——Upon this occaſion, at leaſt, Gentlemen, the power of creation is in your hands; for if you ſeriouſly ſet about it, and ſay, *let there be light amongſt us, there ſhall be light.*

I am, Gentlemen,

Your moſt obedient

Fellow Subject, and Citizen.

THE END.